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## 2. EVIDENCE OF CLOUDED LEOPARD *NEOFELIS NEBULOSA* IN PAKHUI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

During a field project from November 1995 to April 1996 on arboreal mammals in Pakhui Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) (92° 7.5' E - 92° 22' E and 26° 53.7' N - 27° 16.2' N), East Kameng dist., W. Arunachal Pradesh, in northeast India, I came across the carcass of a clouded leopard *Neofelis nebulosa*. The carcass was about 2-3 months old. It consisted of the entire skeleton of the animal (except the skull) along with parts of its skin, one front and one hind limb with the paws and skin covering intact. Clumps of fur and whiskers were also present. Most of the carcass had already rotted and was infested with maggots. At the same spot, the remains of a wild pig were present. The carcass was found in a secondary forest 300-400 m from the forest department colony at Seijusa, and 150 m from an unmetalled forest road used frequently by the forest dept. staff and captive elephants. This area was located near the sanctuary's southern boundary with Assam, very near human habitation. A clouded leopard was sighted about 1 km from Seijusa in reserved forests at the border of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam by Shri Pratap Singh, IFS (a forest officer from Arunachal Pradesh Forest Dept.) in 1994. Athreya and Johnsingh (1995) found evidence of its presence in the area with local tribal hunters in 1994-95, though no photographic evidence of a live animal could be obtained. Two male clouded leopard cubs were found in forests of the Lower Subansiri

dist. in 1995, which are now at Itanagar Zoo (Dey 1995).

The dead animal's paws which were slightly distorted were 5.7 cm in length and 5.5 cm in width. Athreya and Johnsingh (1995) reported average length and width of pugmarks from 4 captive clouded leopards as 5.6 cm and 6 cm, respectively. The tail length was 81 cm. Walker (1975) reports that the tail length of the clouded leopard ranges from 61 to 91 cm. The head was missing, the length from the neck vertebrae to the base of the tail was 66 cm. The length of the hind limb was 52 cm. The shoulder height of the clouded leopard is reported to be about 80 cm (Walker 1975). The whiskers and hair samples of the animal were collected.

Pakhui WLS, with an area of 862 sq. km, is well-protected on its northern and western boundaries by the Bhareli river, to the east by the Pakke river, and is contiguous with Papum Reserve Forest of Khellong Forest Division. To the south lie the reserved forests of Assam. Only a small area, where the carcass was found, near the southeast boundary is disturbed, otherwise the vast inner areas of the sanctuary bear excellent undisturbed forests. There are no settlements inside, except for one or two small ones at the extreme northern boundary. A village on the southeastern boundary has been relocated outside the sanctuary. The lack of many trails

and general inaccessibility has helped in preserving the sanctuary. A proposal has been mooted to declare Pakhui a national park.

I have also seen the jaws of several clouded leopards and tigers, a skin and skull of a leopard cat and another stuffed specimen with tribals in this area. Tracks of tigers, leopards and smaller

cats were seen occasionally along trails and on river beds, both in the adjacent reserved forests and in the Sanctuary.

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APARAJITA DATTA  
Wildlife Institute of India,  
Post bag #18, Dehradun 248 001.

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### 3. *DUGONG* DUGONG IN THE GULF OF KACHCHH

On February 9, 1998, I conducted my annual "Showing of the Flag" among the islands of the Gulf of Kachchh. At about 1130 h, some 45 minutes walk from the Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Ahmedabad's Nature Education Camp on Beyt, and approaching the rocky reefs and sandbars extending north from the Poshita headland, I saw a brown form outlined below the surface of the crystal clear waters. The sea was calm and the bright sun shining from behind. The animal surfaced to breathe and was close enough for me to hear its breath being released. As the flat snout broke the water, followed by the finless back, it looked strangely like a tiny sperm whale! The animal swam along in bucolic fashion, powered by its horizontal, rounded flukes. We could have approached the creature but I decided not to disturb it. It was a large specimen a little over

3 m, judging from the length of the fishing craft we were in alongside it.

It was in the mid eighties that I had found a dead male dugong in these very waters. Dr. Frazier and two post-graduate students from the Biosciences Department, Saurashtra University, Rajkot were fortuitously my guests and they did a detailed dissection of the carcass. It had drowned, apparently having got entangled in a fishing net. There were deep cuts caused by the nylon meshing.

The continued presence of dugongs in these waters adds to the urgency for careful conservation action, even as the Jamnagar coast is witnessing massive industrial development.

February 20, 1998. LAVKUMAR KHACHER  
646, Vastunirman,  
Gandhinagar-382 022, Gujarat.

### 4. WHITE BISON IN CHINNAR

It was Mr. J.L.H. Williams who first reported the occurrence of white gaur in Manjampatti valley and adjoining areas. During

the 1930's, he had observed in this area several herds of gaur with unusually coloured individuals whose colour ranged from 'light red through dun